THE PARISH MESSENGER

A PERSONAL VISITOR TO THE PARISHES

VOLUME 9 WINNIPEG, MAN., DECEMBER, 1953 NUMBER 4

A Blessed Christmas to One and All

Rejoice *Peace*

"REJOICE in the Lord alway . . . And the PEACE of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord." Thus the Apostle Paul exhorts us to enter this season of the year.

Surely, we will all REJOICE at Christmas time. But what's the use if we do not carry this rejoicing with us into the New Year? We learn from the Apostle's emphatic and repeated promptings that God intends His People to be habitually cheerful and happy. But note well the emphasis:—IN THE LORD.

"Rejoice in the Lord" teaches us that manly cheerfulness is characteristic of the true Christian. This is the spirit in which each one of us should go forth into the work of each day, carrying on in trustful prayer, in faith, hope and LOVE.

"And the PEACE of God . . ." which was heralded into the world on that first Christmas Eve long ago with the Song of the Angels is ours today if we would but "Rejoice in the Lord alway".

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, PEACE ON EARTH AMONG MEN OF GOODWILL.'" This too is our CHRISTMAS Son of Praise and Prayer for each one of us to be carolled on into the coming NEW YEAR.

EPIPHANY

The season of the Church Year which follows ADVENT and CHRISTMAS, and precedes LENT is known as EPIPHANY. It is ushered in every year by THE COMING OF THE WISE MEN on January 6th. This date in some countries is known as the Festival of the Three Kings, in still another part of the Christian Church, it is celebrated as Christmas Day, and then too it is referred to as the 13th of Christmas, marking the end of the Christmas season when the Christmas trees and the decorations are taken down.

The Wise Men of Old, somewhere in the Orient, scanned the evening sky and with the trained eyes of science discovered an unusual star. With the Eyes of Faith, the recognized in it a Message from God that the long-promised Messiah had come at last into the world.

A long journey through dreary desert led them to the crib of Jesus. Physical eyes beheld a Child in humble surroundings, dependent upon the loving care of his mother. The God-given sight of Faith saw in Him the only-begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth, so they paid deep homage to Him.

Our eyes of Faith today behold in Jesus the answer to a sin-burdened and helpless mankind. God's own Son who was made flesh in order that He, as our Substitute and Saviour, might fulfill the Law which we have broken, and pay the full penalty for our sins on the Cross of Calvary.

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THE PARISH MESSENGER
News Journal of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America.

Printed quarterly in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The REV. S. O. THORLAKSSON, Editor.
6522-20th Ave. N.W., Seattle 7, Wash.

Tell the Editor

Your Editor is told that the Parish Messenger is:—

1. "The Voice of the Congregations of Synod speaking to each other."
2. "The Glue that binds us into one common mass."
3. "The Disseminator of Information to and about each congregation."

If these are true representations of what the Parish Messenger means to you and your Church, YOU are the one who is responsible for the success of the enterprise. The Editor is only your servant to increase the volume of the Voice (or to subdue its intensity, if necessary); to see to it that the Glue has stick-to-itiveness; and to sort out the information reaching his desk, avoiding mere gossip and serving up to you only such "Articles" and "Flashes" as may help to build up our spirits and encourage us in our efforts to advance God's Kingdom in our midst.

PRESENTATION OF AUTOMOBILE

The Rev. Robert Jack was installed at a joint service of all the congregations in the Arborg-Riverton Parish, Sunday evening, December 13th. The installation, conducted by the President of Synod, took place in the Arborg Church. Just before the service commenced the Trustees of the several congregations dropped in at the Parsonage and presented the Pastor with a brand new Pontiac automobile.

"Hoarded religion pays no interest —and the principal is in danger."

The Rev. Valdimar J. Eylands, D.D.

The Parish Messenger wishes to congratulate Pastor Eylands, his family and Congregation, and to rejoice with them in the special honor that came to him recently when he was given the degree of Doctor of Divinity, "honoris causa," by United College, Winnipeg, Manitoba. We also rejoice with them that the College and its President showed them the further kindness of holding a special convocation for that purpose, in their own Church (First Lutheran), on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Congregation.

United College, Winnipeg, has long been a true friend of our Icelandic Lutheran Synod, its pastors and people. Many of our men have been trained in the College department of that fine institution, and this is the second time it has granted the degree of D.D. to a Pastor of its group.

Dr. Valdimar J. Eylands well deserves this recognition. He has been a faithful Pastor in our Synod for many years. His road of preparation necessary for his calling was by no means an easy one; nevertheless, it was successfully accomplished. For many years Dr. Eylands has been a very active and successful Pastor of the Senior Congregation of our Synod, The First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

One of Dr. Eyland's noteworthy accomplishments has been the authorship of a fine book, "Lutherans in Canada." This book is a storehouse of valuable and interesting information about the growth and accomplishments of the Lutheran Church in Canada.

It is a pleasure for us to think of Dr. Eylands, the President of our Synod, being thus recognized and honored by an outstanding Christian educational institution of Canada. We too (as he is) are most grateful to the United College of Winnipeg.

H. SIGMAR.

In Memoriam

DR. SIGURGEIR SIGURDSSON
Bishop of Iceland

With a painful shock we heard of the sudden passing of this beloved disciple of Jesus Christ. He had made two trips to the Icelanders of North America, and won their their hearts. He seemed so strong that we expected him to live a long time.

In September he had an illness with high fever, but he seemed to recover, and was very soon back to work. October 4th he ordained two candidates for the ministry, one of whom, Bragi Reynis Fridriksson, has been called to service in our Icelandic Lutheran Synod.

The Bishop had been invited to take part in an anniversary festival of a church in the west of Iceland, Sunday, October 10th. The friends who knew him best tried to persuade him not to make the trip, because they knew he was not well, but he was convinced of his duty not

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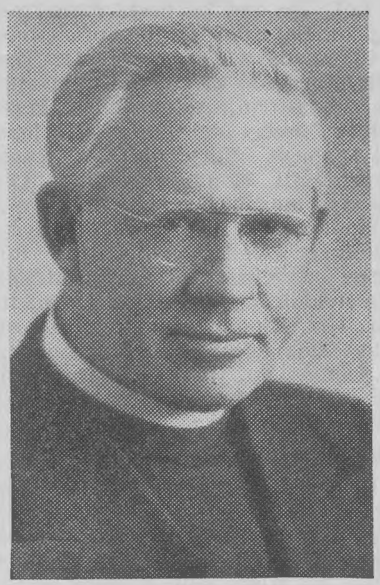

REV. EGILL H. FAFNIS

On the day that the Bishop of Iceland, Dr. Sigurgeir Sigurdsson, passed away, death also took away one of the ministers of our Icelandic Synod, Rev. Egill H. Fafnis. That was a shock and a blow to our Synod. —He looked so young and strong that we certainly did not expect him to be taken away from us so suddenly.

He was born in northern Iceland, Thingeyjarsysla, in 1898. As a child and youngster, he had several homes in that district, with limited opportunities for education. Finally he came to Akureyri in 1920 and got some schooling there. Next year he emigrated to Canada, and stayed for some time in Arborg, Manitoba, and through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Arni Bjornson, got a year at the high school there. He continued for some time in the district, doing carpenter work in the summer and going to school in the winter. He

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DR. SIGURGEIR SIGURDSSON

(Continued from Page 3)

to fail. He and his wife made the trip on Saturday in an automobile in the hands of a careful driver. The festival passed off beautifully, and the return trip was started at 12.00 o'clock Sunday night, in an atrocious snow storm. They did not reach home until Monday evening. On Tuesday morning, October 13th, the Bishop was in his office at work, seemingly well, came home for lunch, conversed with a friend; all of a sudden he felt sick and went to bed. His wife and daughter were at his bedside, and had already sent for a doctor, but before the doctor arrived, the beloved Bishop had breathed his last.

This passing of the man is a picture of him, his consecration to work, his brave spirit, his love of his church. It brings us back to him as a young pastor in the west of Iceland. He lived and worked there, 1917-1938. Often he would walk miles on impossible roads, while he lived in Isafjordur and served the church at Bolimgavik. As a minister and later as Bishop he was exceedingly faithful and active in welfare work for his church and people.

As Bishop he was seemingly tireless in visiting the churches all over Iceland. He was successful in improving the condition of clergy and congregations. He brought about an increase in the number of pastors serving Reykjavik, from two to nine, something sorely needed. He was also successful in vastly improving the choir music of the churches.

There was still another side to his character: he was excedingly warmhearted and had a marvellous home life. Husband and wife, parents and children lived in the bonds of purest affection and co-operation. Their kindness was also generously extended to others. It is stated by those who know that this was the most hospitable home in Reykjavik. It may be added that in the outside world the Bishop had an unusual capacity for getting along with all kinds of people.

His funeral was conducted October 21st. The officiating ministers were: Rev. Sveinn Vikingur, Rev. Jon Auduns and Prof. Asmundur Gudmundsson. It took place in the home, in the cathedral and in the cemetery. These places were not only filled with people, but huge crowds also were in the streets. The funeral, in all its details, was impressive and beautiful.

There is much gratitude for his life's work.

R. MARTEINSSON.

REV. EGILL H. FAFNIS

(Continued from Page 3)

spent a year at Jon Bjarnason Academy in Winnipeg, thereby completing his school course. After that he spent two years at college. Finally he took theology at the Lutheran Seminary in Chicago, graduating from there in 1930. He was ordained to the ministry at the convention of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod, held that summer in Minneota, Minn., he having been called by the Icelandic congregations in the Argyle district.

Before he located there he did some ministerial work in the Upham district in North Dakota. During the summer he married Miss Ellen Freeman from Upham. Their home life was happy and had the added blessing of children.

After a successful pastorate of 15 years in the Argyle district, he received, in 1945, a call to serve the Icelandic congregations in North Dakota. He accepted and stayed till he passed away.

In the pastorates that he served he acquitted himself well both as preacher and pastor. His message was an expression of Christian conviction. As pastor and man "he endeared himself to the people in the community sharing in their joys and sorrows, comforting with tender

sympathy those who wept and showing generosity to those in need." Such is the testimony of a parishioner.

In the work of the Icelandic Synod he was active, practically from the beginning. He was a member of the executive board very soon after his ordination. He was secretary of the Synod 1942-47 and president 1947-1952, the length of time permitted by the constitution of Synod for the office of president.

He had special delight in, and aptitude for work among the young people. For many years he was the director of the summer camps for youth conducted by the Icelandic Synod. He was much at home in that kind of work from inclination and practice.

Another gift he had which he used to great benefit to the church, and that was a beautiful singing voice. He was very generous in the use of that gift to the very last, and here again is the testimony of the parishioner quoted before. "Many a heavy heart felt comfort when he sang, as he so often did at funerals."

"On a hill far away stood an old rugger cross." The very last Sunday of his earthly life he conducted service in the Brown district of Manitoba, and sang a solo, "A hendur fel pu honum," an Icelandic hymn, of beautiful faith. What a fitting farewell to earth.

In two days he had passed into God's great beyond.

May God continue to add blessing to his life's work.

R. MARTEINSSON.

Rev. Bragi Fridriksson and his wife Katrin arrived from Iceland December 16th. They have taken up residence at Lundar.

* * *

Negotiations are under way for Rev. B. Theodor Sigurdsson to serve the Mountain, N.D., parish. His wife and son from Iceland will join him, and he will probably commence his work in the parish in March or April.

Christmas Greetings From Iceland

To all our friends in our Synod, Svava and I now send you in this Christmas issue of the "Messenger" our very best wishes for a happy and blessed Christmas, and a rich and abundant New Year — of love and service to Him Whose birthday we now joyfully celebrate.

We are happy to relate to you that our life here is the land of our forefathers has been and continues to be a very interesting adventure. Each week brings many new experiences. My studies at the University are interesting, our English teaching is gratifying, both because it's necessary to "pay the bills", and because we in turn are learning a lot of Icelandic in the process. Our spare time is enjoyably busy. We have made many new friendships, renewed some old ones, and have "discovered" a number of cousins! Especially Svava. The Schrams, a large and lovely family in Reykjavik, are cousins of Svava's mother. We have been invited to many dinner parties and evening parties both by these new found relatives, and by many friends. We have sung solos and duets at nine occasions, and I have spoken at seven.

In the spring, March, we go to Norway for a month, where we will visit my mother's relatives, and where I expect also to attend two weeks of lectures at the University in Oslo. Then after Easter we go to Lund in Sweden for a six-week stay at the University there. On our return home we expect to travel thru some of continental Europe as well as Great Britain. We look forward to seeing you next July. With Tiny Tim, we re-echo the words, "God bless you everyone!"

SVAVA AND ERIC SIGMAR.

PARISH NEWS FLASHES

First Lutheran Parish, Winnipeg

The 75th Anniversary Celebration now belongs to the past. The Broadcast on October 25th was well received both by the audience in the Church, and the radio listeners. The music by the Choir was of a high order, and the soloists, Mrs. Pearl Johnson and Alvin Blondal, received much deserved praise. The evening service was rendered to more than a capacity audience and was certainly one of the most colorful events in the history of the congregation.

The 75th Anniversary Concert, presented by the combined Choirs of the Church, under the direction of the organist on the evening of November 28th was successfully rendered, and well attended by an appreciative audience. Soloists were Pearl Johnson, Lilia Eylands and Alvin Blondal. Accompanist was Corrinne Day. The Pastor was presented with a "Parker 51" Pen and Pencil set by the Choir; last Sunday evening he was presented with a Doctor's Gown by the three women's organizations of the Church, and Hood by the congregation. Miss Mattie Halldorson made the presentation. Victor Jonasson, Board Chairman, spoke at the close of the Sunday evening service.

A Joint Concert by the Young People's Society and the Sunday School was well attended and a very successful event. The Young People presented plays and skits which were received with enthusiasm. There was community singing and the showing of movie films. Gissur Eliasson, S.S. Superintendent, and Yvonne Matthews, Young People's presidents presided. The Y.P. presented the Pastor with a beautiful electric clock, and the S.S. gave him a billfold. On Saturday afternoon the Deacons of the Church served to 80 persons, and 100 dinners were served to people in their homes. The chairman of the Deacons' Board, Mr. A. G. Eggertson, Q.C., showed beautiful moving pictures which he took on his last trip to Iceland. Sigrid Bardal assisted at the piano during the community singing.

The Selkirk Parish

On Sunday, September 20th, an event long to be remembered took place in the Selkirk Lutheran Church, when Mr. and Mrs. Johann Konrad Polson of Selkirk were commissioned for service in the U.L.C.A. Lutheran Mission in Monravia, Liberia. Mr. Polson will serve as Business Manager for the Missions.

The Rev. W. A. Mehlenbocker of Winnipeg, a member of the Board of Foreign Missions conducted the commissioning service, with the assistance of the local Pastor. Rev. Mehlenbocker also preached an inspiring sermon. After the service, the Ladies of the Church served dinner in the Parish Hall for the immediate families and guests. There Rev. Mehlenbocker, Mr. Polson and Rev. Olafsson spoke. Pastor Olafsson reminded the gathering of a similar event at our church in 1916, when the Rev. and Mrs. S. O. Thorlaksson were commissioned to service in Japan where they served for twenty-five years. Mr. and Mrs. Polson left New York with their two children on November 2nd, by air for Africa. Our sincere prayers go with them.

On Sunday, November 1st, the present staff of our Sunday School Teachers and former Teachers gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Ingjaldson, to honor Mr. Ingjaldson upon his retirement as the Superintendent of the Sunday School after 42 years of service, first as a teacher and then as Superintendent. An electric clock was presented by Mr. Victor Maxon, our new Superintendent. Rev. S. Olafsson and Mr. Victor Erickson, a former teacher, also spoke. Mrs. Maria Henrickson, a teacher of old and new

MR. AND MRS. JOHANN KONRAD POLSON

standing, gave a paper on the history of our Sunday School. forty-five teachers and ex-teachers participated.

Our Sunday School has an enrollment of 175.

The Gimli Parish

Our new church building is nearing completition, and we hope to have an official opening on the night before Christmas. The dedication of the Church will not take place until next year — perhaps during the 1954 Convention of Synod.

A newly made oak Pulpit was presented to the congregation by the First Lutheran Church of Winnipeg. This Pulpit, as well as our pews, were made by Mr. Alfred Grossman, a direct descendant of Martin Luther.

On Sunday, November 22nd, we conducted a Fellowship Service at the Federated Church of Gimli where we expressed our thanks for their hospitality in granting us the use of their Church during our period of construction. Rev. P. M. Petursson of Winnipeg, responded on behalf of the Federated Church.

The Arborg Parish

The Rev. Robert Jack arrived from Iceland on November 21st with his wife, Vigdis Sigursdardottir and three of their five children. They were welcomed at a Parish reception in the Geysir Hall on Sunday, November 22nd. Pastor H. S. Sigmar was the Master of Ceremonies. Mr. Jonas Skulason spoke the words of welcome on behalf of the entire Parish. Mr. Arthur Sigurdson presented a gift of much beauty and an electric stove. Pastor and Mrs. Jack have already won their way into the hearts of their parishioners.

The Argyle Parish

Herman Arason, who spent the last eight months in the British Isles and on the Continent, and who also visited Iceland, returned home on November 4th. The Grund Ladies Aid held a program in the Grund Hall on November 17th, where Herman showed slides and gave a talk on his trip abroad.

At the Glenboro Thanksgiving service, two new members were received into membership.

The trustees of the Argyle Parish

held their annual meeting at the Glenboro Church on November 8th, when the Pastor's salary was raised $200 per year.

The Baldur Legion held their annual Armistice Service at the United Church in Baldur on November 11th. The service was well attended with Rev. J. Fredericksson as guest speaker.

The Ladies Aid of Baldur held a well attended and successful bazaar at Baldur on October 31st. The Ladies Aid of Bru Church held their chicken supper on October 1st, The Ladies Aid of the Glenboro Church held their chicken supper on November 7th. Both suppers were well attended and very successful.

The Baldur Ladies Aid sponsored a play presented by the Anglican Young People of Holmfield on November 9th.

The combined choirs of the Lutheran and the United Church of Glenboro are preparing to present a Christmas Cantata under the direction of Mrs. J. Rutherford and Mr. A. Sigmar, organist.

The Stewardship Secretary of the Synod, Rev. Stefan Guttormson of Cavalier, North Dakota, conducted stewardship services in Baldur and Glenboro on Sunday, November 15. His message was very timely and most inspiring.

United Lutheran, Cavalier, N.D.

September 27 was "Youth Sunday" at United Lutheran. The Young People of the Church preached the sermon, read the lessons, ushered, and provided special music. The teachers of the Church School were installed at that same service.

Twelve members of the United Lutheran Luther League attended the first North Dakota State Luther Convention in Fargo, October 16th and 17th. Our League had applied for membership, and was accepted into the State League at this convention.

On the 18th of October United Lutheran received new members into her fellowship. The group was made up of fifteen adults and twelve children.

November 8th was set aside as Loyalty Sunday at United Lutheran. All the members of the congregation were asked to demonstrate their loyalty to the Church by attending that service. The Church was filled to overflowing, making it a truly inspiring service. That was also the day set aside for the annual Every Member Visit. Fourteen men, in teams of two each, went out to visit every home, and gather in the pledges for the support of the Church in 1954. The Visit was an outstanding success.

United Lutheran has taken on a "new look" this fall. New windows were purchased and put in the Church. This new addition has greatly enhanced the appearance of the building.

The Blaine Parish

Recently Blaine Lutheran Church voted unanimously to discontinue salary aid from the Board of American Missions, with sincere thanks to the Board for valuable assistance for many years. This was done primarily so that more aid would be released where the need is greater.

The Sunday School has been growing. The attendance each Sunday averages 65.

A Youth Choir has been organized by our Sunday School Superintendent, Mrs. Ed Kimball, with the assistance of Mrs. H. Sigmar. The membership of this choir is now 30. This augurs well for the future of the Church Choir. The Junior Ladies Aid in cooperating with the leaders of this new choir, in making suitable choir gowns.

A Men's Club was organized this fall in connection with our Church. The membership has reached 25. They are arranging to bring in entertaining and educational programs to which the public will be invited. Other projects are being developed. Mr. H. W. Johnson is the president.

The Junior Ladies Aid, under special sponsorship of their Ways and Means Committee, has already raised over $300 towards a project of adding to the kitchen facilities of the Parish Hall.

Point Roberts, Washington

Dr. H. Sigmar has been serving our Parish with services approximately once a month for the past year and a half, with the exception of two occasions, when the pulpit was filled by Rev. F. W. Sharman from the All Saints' Church in Ladner, who preached a Good Will sermon, and Rev. Erik Brynjolfson, who serves the Icelandic Congregation in Vancouver, B.C.

At the first of the year, we organized a group known as the Ladies Auxiliary of the Church, or the L.A.C. This group of ladies has been active through the whole year, and includes all the ladies of the community who wish to join us. We meet every two weeks to discuss matters pertaining to the welfare of our Church and to sew articles for sale at our annual bazaar. Early in the year we undertook to pay off the unpaid balance on our Wurlitzer. In order to do this we sponsored a Smorgasborg Dinner, which was served the Saturday before Easter. This was a huge success. Then in partnership with Northwest Grange, we served our annual Salmon Barbecue Dinner in July. This too was very successful. On the 5th of December we held our annual bazaar, which surpassed our highest hopes in monetary returns. We take this opportunity to thank all the ladies for their wonderful cooperation and fine help. We have practically paid off our debt in one year.

The next big occasion in our Church calendar is our annual Christmas Cantata "Prepare Him Room," under the able leadership of Walter Vopnford, with Dr. Sigmar in the Pulpit on December 23. Every year our young people who started to sing in the Sunday School Choir try to come home for this special occasion to sing in the Choir, for without them, we would be unable to present it.

We wish all our readers a happy and glorious Christmas Season.

Calvary, Seattle, Washington

At a specially called congregational meeting, it was voted to approve a recommendation of the Church Council to exchange our old organ for a new and larger one. It is now installed and was used for the first time at a grand pre-Christmas Sacred Concert given by our Church Choir on December 13.

On December 27 at 1.30 p.m. our Pastor and Choir will be on KING-TV, sponsored by the Seattle Council of Churches, the theme being: "AND GIVE THEE PEACE".

Our accessions since August are four adults and eight children.

Our Ladies Aid has already sponsored two dinner gatherings this fall which gave opportunities for the members of the Church to fellowship informally. At one of these, they provided a separate room and service for the children followed by a movie in the S.S. Hall. These extras were carried out by Luther Leaguers so that the adults could visit together with more freedom.

Mrs. Jakobina Johnson, a noted writer of Icelandic verse and a celebrated translator fulfilled her three score years and ten on October 24. We are proud of Jakobina.

We have adopted the custom of having two Greeters every Sunday morning to welcome the worshippers as they *enter* the Church for worship. We recommend this plan to you for trial.

Our members use their telephones to call people to Church, and their automobiles to call for them, not hit and miss but systematically.

On Wednesday, November 18 at noon, Mary E. Frederick, the beloved wife of the President of our congregation who is also Consul for Iceland in this area, heard the Call to

come Home after a long lingering illness. She had been for many years Sunday School Superintendent and very active in the Ladies Aid and Choir of our Church.

Our Pastor was on the U.L.C.A Team of Evangelists of the Seattle-Tacoma Evangelism Mission during October. There were 84 Lutheran churches of this area that participated and benefitted by this movement which was carried on every day for a week and two Sundays.

One Sunday in November it was quite noticable that wives who had been coming to church alone started to bring their husbands.

Our Every - Member - Visitation started on November 22. Reports are very favorable to date. A sense of Stewardship is on the up and up.

Our Pastor exchanged pulpits with Dr. H. Sigmar of Blaine one Sunday in November. Both pastors enjoyed the shift of scenery!

Thanks to our L.L. Advisors, Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Nielsen, the Young Folks of our church are really enjoying themselves in various activities, such as Fireside Chats, Camp Outings, Roller Skating, Bowling and Basket Ball. Their projects are: Youth Choir, Ushering at Church Services, taking Charge of a Nursery during the Morning Worship Hour, Old Clothes Drive, Odd-Jobbing and Baby-Sitting.

EPIPHANY

(Continued from Page 1)

Epiphany means the Manifestations of our Lord, beginning at the Manger and ending on the Mount of Transfiguration. We now enter upon a season of serious business, cultivating and nourishing the Christ-life in us individually and in His Church at Home and Abroad.

For many years in our Church, the Epiphany Season has been recognized as our time in the Church Year for studying and giving to Foreign Missions which is now more correctly known as our Church Work Abroad. To know that we can share in this Program is not only an opportunity but a priceless privilege which as true followers of Christ who have realized His Manifestations in our hearts *dare not forego.*

THE TREASURER REPORTS

Following payments received:

Betel, Silver Bay	$ 52.00
Lundar	113.15
Cavalier	169.02
Westerheims Ladies Aid	25.00
Fjalla	101.50
Langruth, Special to Women's Missionary Society	25.00
Langruth	85.00
Concordia, Churchbridge	46.43
Cavalier, Special to Pastor's Memorial Fund in memory of the Rev. E. H. Fafnis	25.00
Calvary, Seattle	171.27
Selkirk	167.50
Frelsis Ladies Aid for Lutheran World Action	30.00
Vidalins, British Guiana Missions	9.26
Peters, British Guiana Missions	4.27
Hallson, British Guiana Missions	5.00
Vikur, Mountain	49.11
Blaine	130.22

Except where otherwise noted, all payments are applied to Budget Plan.

N. O. BARDAL.

An Open Letter from the Synod Secretary

Dear Members of Synod:

At our last convention we resolved to ask each of our congregations to revise its roll of present membership, substituting the term "active members" in place of "confirmed members".

It is the responsibility of each Pastor and Board of Trustees to carry out this resolution of the Synod. It is an important undertaking because our budget will be divided among the congregations on the basis of *active members.*

My purpose in writing this letter is to remind the Pastors and Delegates of the Seattle Convention of this action, and to inform those congregations that were not represented.

Our Executive Committee of Synod has outlined the Standards by which "active membership" is to be determined, and has instructed the Secretary to publish this information.

An "Active Member" is:—

1. A confirmed member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, who desires to continue as such.
2. One who participates in the life of the Congregation by:
   a. Attending services of the Congregation as health and work permit.
   b. Contributing time, talent and means to the work of the Church. (Here we follow the New Testament Standard of free will giving. No amount of giving can be set as an obligation.)
3. One who dwells within the community where the Congregation is functioning. *Non-resident* members should be encouraged to transfer to a church where they live and can be active, but sometimes our members wish to retain their home town affiliation, at l e a s t temporarily. Sometimes they are away from home for a limited time in military service or on business assignments. In all such cases, their names should be retained on the membership list. However, along with others who are temporarily unable to be active, they should be recorded as non-resident or non-active members. Their number should not be included in statistics sent to the Synod, upon which the treasurer prorates the annual budget. We feel that this is only fair to the congregations which have a great number of names on their rolls of people who have moved or become inactive.

Each congregation should revise its roll of active membership *now* if it has not already done so, and should send the accurate figures to the Treasurer, Mr. N. O. Bardal, as soon as possible. Each parish will have to arrive at the revised figure in its own way — either by contacting the membership through mail, or personally. If a member of your Church desires to be a follower of Christ and a supporter of His work, he is "active" regardless of the talent or treasure at his disposal. If he is a member in "name only", he should become our greatest concern, the object of our sincerest prayers and friendliest efforts to bring him back into the fold of the "Good Shepherd". But until an individual is active in the true sense, he should not be numbered among those who are expected to contribute to the missionary efforts of the Church because it is wrong to ask a man to be an Apostle (directly or through his gifts) until he is a Disciple of Jesus Christ. And we cannot reasonably expect a man to give of his means, until he has freely given himself to His Lord.

H. S. SIGMAR, Sec.

STEWARDSHIP SECRETARY SPEAKS . . .

Our best measuring stick for determining the Christian vitality of any congregation is its Benevolent giving. We have many ideas about Benevolent giving in our Synod, let's set some of them straight.

Let's get rid of the idea that the money we give to Benevolence is our "payment to Synod", as though we were paying tribute to some foreign tyrant. The Synod is no one but yourself and all the other individuals who belong to it. Its officers are there by your vote. They carry out the work and responsibilities that you give them. Money sent to the Synod Treasurer for Benevolent purposes must be handled in the way you have directed. He and the other officers of Synod are nothing more than extensions of your working Christian arms.

For the last two years now our Synod has, in convention, adopted the "budget plan" which works this way: all Benevolence receipts are divided by the Synod treasurer 50-50. This means that 50 per cent of this money goes for Synod uses; five per cent to the Pastor's Memorial Fund (used primarily to help avowed ministerial students through college and seminary), five per cent to Sunshine Lutheran Camp, the other 40 per cent to the Synod for office and travel expenses, printing the Parish Messenger and the Yearbook, etc.

The other 50 per cent goes directly to the ULCA and is used for a variety of purposes. American and Foreign Missions, Pensions for Pastors and widows, Christian Higher Education (Colleges and Seminaries), Evangelism and Social Action, and Parish Education to name a few of them. The two biggest items are American and Foreign Missions. First, American Missions, 37 per cent of the money we forward to the ULCA goes for this. The story is: Till now the ULCA has been establishing a new congregation somewhere in America every 10 days. The prospects are very good that in 1953 there will have been organized one new congregation every seven days. But if this stepped-up program is successful, there will be funds left for 1954 to organize only 15 new congregations! This will leave 37 fields undeveloped next year only because of lack of funds.

Of our money sent to the ULCA, 20 per cent goes to Foreign Missions. We have fields in Argentina, Japan, British Guiana, India, Liberia, and Malaya. The mission work in Malaya has just started, it is our new field since being chased out of China by the Communists. India is our concern just now, there was a terrible flood there this fall, greatly damaging our Lutheran property, leaving our Lutheran people and their neighbors bitterly impoverished. Something must be done if the damages are to be repaired, suffering people helped and the work of extending the Kingdom continued there.

We support these things through our giving. The needs of our Church have been allocated according to the number of Active Members to the various churches. The least we can do is meet this quota or apportionment 100 per cent. That's the minimum, when we have done that we have merely done our duty. As Christians we ought to do more! And we can by giving more to Benevolence, through the red side of our envelopes, or if you don't use that system in your church, urge your board to send on the full amount of its apportionment *at least;* better still, send in 120 per cent of the apportionment, which is the beginning of the "Second Mile".

S. T. GUTTORMSSON.